

REMARKS

In response to the final office action of July 7, 2005, applicants asks that all claims be allowed in view of the amendment to the claims and the following remarks.

Claims 3-17 are now pending, of which claims 5 and 13 are independent. Claims 1 and 2 have been cancelled, and claims 3-5, 7, 9-13 and 17 have been amended. Applicant asserts that no new matter has been introduced.

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 5-8 and 13-16 would be allowable if written in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, claims 1 and 2 have been cancelled, and claims 5 and 13 have been written in independent form to include all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 3, 4, 9-12 and 17 have been amended to depend from a claim amended to depend from a claim that was indicated to be allowable.

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Maccabee (U.S. Patent No. 5,646,907) in view of Pepper (U.S. Patent No. 6,809,991). Claims 3 and 11 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Maccabee in view of Pepper and DiMarzio (U.S. Patent No. 6,069,843). Claims 9, 10 and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Maccabee in view of Pepper and Compana (U.S. Patent No. 6,838,671). Each of these claims has been cancelled or now depends directly or indirectly from a claim that was indicated to be allowable. Accordingly, applicant submits that these rejections should be withdrawn.

Applicant asks that all pending claims be allowed in view of the amendments.

It is believed that all of the pending issues have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this reply should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this reply, and the

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amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

No fee is believed due. Please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: September 7, 2005

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